



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
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WORKPLACE NON-VIOLENCE

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

As an employer, Hawaii State Government believes that its greatest assets are its employees. Current national statistics regarding violence in the workplace and recent incidents happening locally indicate that the risk for violent acts against our employees is rising at an alarming rate. To increase awareness and protect the employee and the public against violence, a Statewide policy to provide for a safe work environment has been developed by the Department of Human Resources Development (HRD).

This policy is to be used by all State departments and agencies under the jurisdiction of the Human Resources Development Department as a guideline for developing and implementing its own policy for non-violence in the workplace. Each organization's policy and plan of action should address their particular needs and utilize resources readily available to them.

2.0 POLICY

To protect its most valued asset, Hawaii State Government has adopted a policy of zero-tolerance for any work related or workplace violence. In addition to physical attack or property damage, behaviors that express or intimates an intent to cause physical or mental harm to another person will be regarded as violence. All incidents must be reported and will be processed immediately according to statutes, rules, contract agreements or policies.

All employees of Hawaii State Government are responsible for maintaining a harmonious work environment to enhance the organization's ability to fulfill its mission and goals.

3.0 REFERENCES

- Section 396-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes
- Cal/OSHA Guidelines for Workplace Security
- Workplace Violence, Vincent J. McNally, FBI Special Agent
- Preventing Homicide in the Workplace, NIOSH Alert, Sept. 1993
- Threats and Violence in the Federal Workplace, Federal Protective Service
- Workplace Violence Prevention, Hawaii Employee Assistance Services
- Collective Bargaining Agreements

4.0 **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Hawaii State Government employees within the Executive branch.

5.0 **DEFINITIONS**

- Workplace Anywhere the employee is authorized to conduct work including work sites away from the office.
- Threat An expression, verbal or non-verbal, of intention to inflict physical or mental harm or injury to another person or property.
- Crisis A critically significant event requiring sound decision making to bring the situation back to normal.
- Violence Physical attack, property damage, or behaviors that express or intimates an intent to cause physical or mental harm to another person.
- Guideline A preferred course of action which is broad and general in nature that conveys a principle idea or intent that should be used, when it is determined to be practical, to develop specific procedures.
- Intervention The act of interfering in events or the affairs of others for the purpose of restoring a peaceful coexistence among employees.
- Harassment To insult, taunt, or challenge another person in a manner likely to provoke an immediate violent response.

6.0 **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

6.1 **Department of Human Resources Development**

- a. Develop and maintain a statewide non-violence in the workplace policy and procedural guidelines.
- b. Ensure development and implementation of non-violence policies for agencies and departments in the executive branch.
- c. Dependent on available resources, provide services or coordination of services such as training or referrals to counseling services.
- d. Provide services and expertise regarding the statewide policy on non-violence including such specific areas of labor relations, workers compensation, safety, recruitment, and other relevant areas.
- e. Serve as repository for quarterly summaries of workplace violence incident reports.

6.2 Departments and agencies

- a. In alignment with the statewide zero-tolerance policy, develop and enforce a non-violence in the workplace policy and procedures that will meet their organization's particular needs and utilize available in-house resources.
- b. Promote awareness through training to enhance employee's individual responsibility for the prevention of workplace violence.
- c. Prominently post departmental non-violence policy and procedures in work areas.
- d. Forward summaries of incident reports to the Office of the Director, HRD on a quarterly basis. (Use attachment A)

6.3 All employees, supervisors and managers

- a. Recognize indicators of potential or actual violent acts and follow departmental procedures to defuse those situations.
- b. Report all threats or violent incidents as outlined in their department's procedures.
- c. As a witness to workplace violence, perform violence intervention as taught in training and call for help as the situation dictates.
- d. Support the zero-tolerance for violence policy by getting to know your fellow employees and by practicing courtesy, respect and kindness at all times.

7.0. STRUCTURE

The following descriptions are to be used as guidelines only. Each agency will develop their specific structure according to their needs and available resources.

- 7.1 Utilizing available resources and expertise, each organization will develop a workplace violence management team. The team should include representatives of management, labor, personnel, security, and others that the organization feels will contribute to the team's purpose. The team reports directly to the director, deputy director or comparable position.

The team will be responsible for the development, implementation, and maintenance of policy and procedures on managing violence in the workplace. The policy should consist of three major segments: prevention, crisis intervention, and post crisis follow-up. The team will evaluate and update the policy on a regular basis and also conduct debriefings after each significant crisis event for the same purposes. For those agencies with limited human resources, the team may also perform crisis intervention duties.

a. Prevention

1. Provide or coordinate training for all employees, supervisors, and managers on preventing, recognizing, and managing violence.
2. Screen potentially violent job applicants according to statutes, rules or policies. If in doubt, call the Exam Branch of HRD for consultation.
3. With active participation from employees, develop and implement management strategies that lessen stress in the workplace and make the workforce more aware, sensitive, and tolerant of the feelings of others.
4. Provide access to available counseling services to employees.
5. Continuously evaluate and improve the physical environment of the workplace so that workers can be reasonably protected from violence.

b. Crisis Intervention

Because violent incidents such as physical abuse can occur in seconds, all of the employees who are witness to these kinds of incidents are responsible for intervening and/or reporting as taught in training or according to departmental procedures.

A major decision in any crisis intervention is when to call the police. Because there are so many scenarios regarding the levels and kinds of harassment, threats, and physical assaults, it is impossible to develop specific guidelines for calling the police or others for assistance. Since

the state has adopted a zero tolerance for violence policy, the decision to call the police by either the victim or a witness, is based on one's "gut feeling" that a threat to personal safety has been made. Further, the decision will never be questioned and will **always** be supported by management. It is mandatory that each agency have this written into their policies.

Note: The Honolulu Police Department (HPD) has said that physical assaults need not occur for them to respond to calls regarding workplace violence. They will come to the workplace to document threats and incidents of harassment and thus initiate a file for the perpetrator. The file will be useful if the violence escalates and a temporary restraining order is sought. Also, HPD will check if the perpetrator has any guns registered and will investigate any new gun permit applications.

In addition to every employee being responsible for crisis intervention, each agency should consider developing crisis intervention teams to provide organized support for crisis situations. The number of teams and levels at which they will operate are dependent on the resources available to each department. If an organization does not have enough resources, the workplace violence management team could provide the support. Team members should be able to work under extreme stress in a calm, empathetic and non-defensive manner.

The primary role of the team (crisis management or crisis intervention) is to defuse and resolve violent incidents or escalating violence by utilizing skills taught in training and following departmental procedures. The team will restore order to the situation so that critical information can be gathered and sound recommendations for resolution can be made. The team will document incidents and ensure that summaries of all incidents are forwarded to the Office of the Director, HRD on a quarterly basis.

The following are some examples of the support to be provided:

1. Help to stabilize the situation by using tactics to defuse violence as taught in training.
2. Help to interview participants for fact finding and provide comfort where needed.
3. Notify the proper authorities, agencies, or bargaining units.
4. Document the incident.
5. Request and coordinate help from such agencies as the Department of Human Resources Development.

6. Share observations and data for evaluation purposes.
7. Make recommendations for policy improvement.
8. Make recommendations for disciplinary, legal, counseling, or other actions.

c. Post Crisis Follow-up

The responsibility for these procedures belong to the workplace violence management or crisis intervention teams.

1. Provide or arrange counseling support for employees.
2. Conduct debriefing with all those involved including the workplace violence management team.
3. Follow-up with Worker's Compensation, Labor Relations, Unions, police, OSHA and other related agencies to fulfill statutory, policy or contractual requirements.
4. Recommend ways to prevent similar acts of violence.
5. Ensure that complete documentation of incident has been completed and filed.